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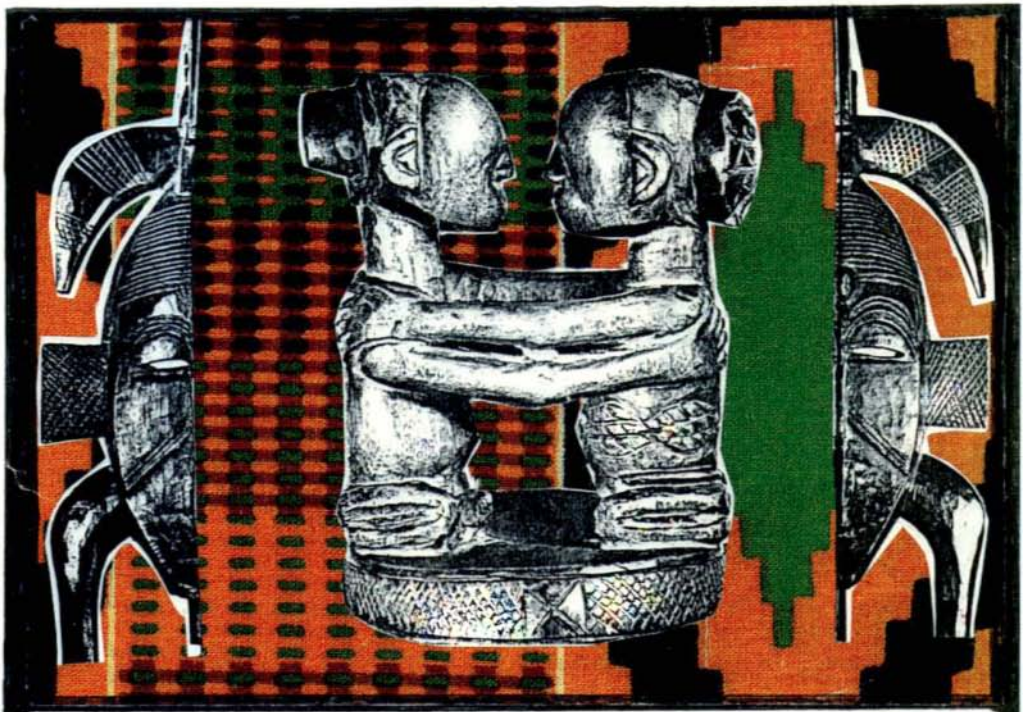

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HARAMBEE FLAME EDITORIAL POLICY

The HARAMBEE FLAME is the monthly newsletter of the Harambee Afrikan Cultural Organization(Nebraska State Pen chapter). Ours is a pan-Africanist publication, meaning that we view all people of African descent as one African people, having certain basic interests in common. Also, the HARAMBEE FLAME attempts to be Africentric, in that, through study of the history, cultures, and traditional values of African people, we week to have and cultivate an African way of looking at things.

The main purposes of the HARAMBEE FLAME are to stimulate and inform. We list "stimulate" first because, more than anything else, we want our readers to be moved to question their/your own ideas, lives, and the circumstances in which we live and to challenge those things that must be challenged in order for us to move from a condition of mental and spiritual servitude and physical dependence upon Caucasian institutions to a state of collective self-determination. Toward this purpose, we present commentaries, poems, etc. These do not necessarily represent the official positions of the Harambee Afrikan Cultural Organization.

The HARAMBEE FLAME provides information because wise people want to know what's going on and because certain kinds of information can stimulate the mind, inspire people to want to act, and influence them to pursue proper understanding so that the actions they take will be as effective as possible. The main vehicle we use to provide information is our "From Other Sources" feature in which we make an effort to provide news about the problems we African people are confronted by and the steps we are taking to resolve them. In this feature, we try to provide coverage of the activities of African people and developments affecting us in the U.S., the nations of Africa, and elsewhere. In "Commentary," we offer analysis of and views about current events and developments.

We encourage you to send your comments, essays, poems, etc. to HARAMBEE FLAME; Harambee Afrikan Cultural Org.; P.O. Box 2500; Lincoln, NE.; 68542-2500.

INTERVIEW

Super Anges performed for the Harambee Afrikan Cultural Organization African History program. Thanks to Eugenia Chasme of the Labelle Afrique Foundation, Kit Voorhees of the University of Nebraska, and the prison A & R department, Super Anges performed for the general prison population on the evening of Thursday, April 9th. A predominantly African audience filled the prison chapel and were treated to about an hour of traditional music, singing, dance, and theater. Super Anges presented stories of fishing, harvest, and celebration of life through these art forms. They also got members of the audience involved by pulling a number of us up to the stage to dance with them.

Following the performance, I interviewed Stan Tohon, the director of Super Anges. Brother Tohon's first language is Fon, then French. While he does speak English, it is not a language he speaks ordinarily. When necessary, for purposes of clarity, I have put certain words, phrases, and so forth into brackets. In a couple of instances, the recording of the interview did not enable us to understand words. A series of periods between words signifies this. Appreciation goes out to Shaheed Biko Hamza for transcribing the tape.

Editor: So you're from the Fon people of Benin, West Africa.

Bro. Tohon: Yes. Benin, West Africa.

E: Your group is called what?

BT: My group is called "Super Anges."

M: Which means "great angels"?

BT: Yeah.

M: And what gave you the idea of forming the group?

BT: When I was in school and I play music, and one day I say I stop school and I play music. And when I was playing music, I see this guy name "Kofi." So Kofi has the band, "Super Anges." We join our force to push Benin culture up. So Kofi and me, we work like twenty years. And

myself, I have ...fifteen c. d. s.

E: And you're doing one now. Right?

BT: Yeah. Now I'm in the studio in Omaha, and I want to make one c. d. mixer, with American people and African people.

Brother Tohon drumming during Super Anges' February 24th. performance at our African History program

E: Who are some of the people who are going to be involved?

BT: I invite some guests, play with one group in Omaha named "Guess Work," Angela and Lisa. And I play with keyboard ...named Leon Adam Zimizumam[spelling?] And I play with Super Anges, some people, plenty people.

E: In the Harambee Afrikan Cultural Organization, one of our main principles is that all African people, whether we're from the United States or from Africa or the Caribbean, we're all African people.

BT: Yeah.

E: So we don't make any distinctions, like "African-American" or whatever.

BT: Uh, huh. Africans!

E: Yeah. We Africans, period. I know from the past; for example, last week, we had a brother here from Ghana who is a drummer, named Wilson Akortia. And one of the things we ask brothers and sisters who are from the continent about is their reception by African people here; because we know that, sometimes, because of the experience here, Africans born here often treat Africans from the continent as if they were foreigners. So my question is: how has your reception been on the part of African people born here and how have you dealt with that reception.

BT: Some African Americans think, if they go to Africa, people don't receive them good. And why they[our ancestors who were brought to the Americas in slave ships] leave Africa, because it's us. But it's not that. It's the whites. It's white man who come[to Africa] with gun and everything and take our ancestors to here and Brazil and everywhere. So we[ancestors who remained in Africa] don't want and our ancestors who come here, they don't want to come here. It was by force.

E: Right.

BT: So nobody don't like, and people cry. People cry when they see our brother, our sister, going. Everybody cry. But now, some African American, they think we accept to sell them. No! It's not true. It is the white man... organize...Everywhere you see, they put black man in. They[Africans born in the Americas] see black. But it's not black. It's white. The hand. It's white that do everything. They put black people[out front, as if we were in charge]. So some African Americans, they think Africa, they don't love them. We love our brother here. Sometimes we see them, we cry because we see that we are the same. And sometime you see an African American and you think he's your friend in Benin or Nigeria. You see this man. "I know this man."

E: Uh, huh.

BT: You see? So I think American people, African American people, must come back home and talk with Africa, walk with Africa, to help Africa because all of you who come here is some force for Africa. And they[Europeans] take that force. So now Africa is sick because all of its own, plenty of them, are here. And even if you are not here for slave, you are here for[due to] immigration... In Africa, nothing happen because they take everything. They take gold. They take diamond, everything to come here and they are rich, and...we are poor. So, normally, African American must come back and walk, talk with their brothers, stay in Africa and make Africa up, together... I think people think Africa a fighting place, Africa is a animals place. No.

E: Well you know what happens here in the organization. We study. We read African history, African traditions and cultures and so forth--people like Cheikh Anta Diop, Yosef ben-Jochannan, and some of these people. But the problem is that most African people here get their stereotypes and so forth about African folks from the continent from the television, from movies, and from the news. On the news, anytime you hear about the African continent, you hear about death--either death by famine, death by war, or death by disease. And if it's in the movies, it's usually Africa as a backdrop for some European romances. So that's all. If brothers and sisters over here are not studying, that's aLL OF Africa that they "know" about. You know...

BT: It's mind pollution!

E: Yeah, it is. But look. I guess it's time for us to get out of here. But, man, I'm glad you made it. I hope to see you again.

BT: Thank you.

E: Anything else you want to say?

BT: No, no. It's good. Maybe I say thanks for everything you do here.

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FROM OTHER SOURCES

African Doctors From U.S. Share Their Medical Skills With Sisters And Brothers In The Motherland

"The Flying Hospital's destination: Accra, Ghana. Its plan is to carry 125 African and African-American physicians, surgeons and nurses to provide medical care for the poor. 'We chose Ghana for our maiden flight because it has a stable democracy and economy', says Peter A. Sam, an environmental scientist in Kansas City, Kan., and a founder of African American Doctors for Africa(AADOFA).

"AADOFA touts its flight as the first comprehensive medical missions conceived, planned, managed and staffed by Black doctors and scientists. Jasper Fullard Jr., an internal medicine specialist in Kansas City, was preparing for the mid-March trip. 'The fact that the mission is led by doctors of African descent is crucial to me. I see information on the television news about what's happening to our African brothers and sisters. I feel that if Black doctors don't at least take an interest in trying to do something ourselves, we can't expect others to care'.

"...AIDS is a scourge that has all but depopulated some countries, but the media spotlight on HIV infection sometimes obscures the easily preventable and treatable diseases that ravage Africa. The problems are closely tied to poverty and a despoiled ecology. For example, sub-Saharan Africa encompasses 15 of the world's poorest countries and the simple lack of drinking water fosters diseases such as schistosomiasis(caused by parasitic worms), malaria and guinea worm infection...

"The Flying Hospital contains all the accoutrements of its earthbound variants--from waiting rooms to classrooms to pharmacies and pediatric clinics. It can treat 30 surgical patients and hundreds of nonsurgical patients daily. It boasts dental and surgical suites where everything from hernia repair and cancer surgery to delicate corneal transplants can be performed. It also carries desperately needed low-

tech supplies such as masks, clean needles and water purification equipment. The mission also will provide disease screening...

"Another group of Black physicians planning broadscale medical missions to Africa is the Fobang Foundation, a nongovernmental public health organization based in Boston and the Cameroon... The initiative, called Hospital Assistance for Rural Cameroon, would provide basic health education and services using mobile health vans coordinated from rural clinics..."

-from "A Medical Flight Plan For Africa's Care," page 30, April EMERGE Magazine(Washington, D.C.)

Corporate Ads Demeaning To Africans Protested

In January, the NAACP demanded that the Goodyear Tire Company pull a television ad on stations in Latin America that depicted blacks as savages and mocked their physical features. While Goodyear complied, it wasn't the only American company that had traded in vile racist stereotypes to push its products.

"Thousands of TV viewers in Peru saw a group of half-naked blacks with war paint and bones stuck through their noses dancing around whites tied to wooden stakes. The whites are saved when the blacks are tossed packs of Royal Dessert, a Nabisco brand snack. The racially slanderous ad aired twice in 1996...

"There are reports that McDonald's, Pepsi and Coca Cola also aired racially offensive commercials or sponsored popular variety programs that grotesquely caricatured blacks as singing, dancing, happy go lucky clowns, cannibals, crooks and prostitutes.

"Observers report that these commercials and variety shows with American corporate sponsors air on Spanish language TV stations in cities in the U.S...

"Many Latinos are recent immigrants to the U.S. Many have little knowledge of African American culture, customs, and

are unfamiliar with the history of racial discrimination and segregation in the U.S. The negative images of African Americans in commercials reinforce their views of blacks as clowns, coons and criminals...

"Other than the action by the NAACP against the Goodyear ads, these commercials have drawn little attention, and few protests. There's a reason. McDonald's and Coco-Cola have African Americans in their commercials in the U.S. as achieving, prosperous professionals, and business persons with intact families. This is not a matter of corporate altruism, it's a matter of dollars...They spent more on clothing, appliances, and food items per capita than any other group in America, and are more likely to purchase brand name products..."

-from "Corporate Ads Depicted Blacks As Cannibals, Crooks And Prostitues," pages 1 and 4, March 19 THE CALL(Kansas City, MO.)

Color In New Haven Jury & Court Systems Sought

"The lack of a diverse jury pool, especially in urban areas, has prompted the state to use different criteria in selecting potential jurors.

"The old system culled jurors from lists of voters and licensed drivers. Starting in September, the state also will use lists of people who pay income taxes and receive unemployment compensation.

"The overwhelming number of jurors in the New Haven court system are white and suburban, leading to miscarriage of justice, some leaders said.

"A survey of 16 murder trials in Superior Court last year showed that only two of the 12-member juries included more than two minority jurors, while 15 of the defendants in those cases were minorities, the New Haven Register reported.

"Of the 15 communities that report to the New Haven judicial

district, the minority population is about 57,000, or 12.8 percent of the total population of about 4446,000...

"No black prosecutors or public defenders handle major criminal cases at New Haven Superior Court. The district's only black judge handles arraignments and low-level criminal cases...

-from "State Tries To Get More Minorities For Mostly White Criminal Juries," page 4, March/April THE HISPANIC REGISTER(Chino, CA.)

In The Prison Business, Crime Does Pay

..."Private prison companies are acutely aware of how they make money. 'While arrests and convictions are steadily on the rise, profits are to be made--profits from crime' one company brochure for potential investors boasted. 'Maximize Investment Returns In This Exploding Industry', another brochure claimed. One company even figured out its average canteen profit per prisoner - $7 a month.

"Information on the companies' costs is usually not available to others, however, state and local officials are finding. The companies call this information 'proprietary', meaning it belongs to them and is not public..."

-from "Privatization Problems Increase," pages 1 and 2, March COALITION FOR PRISONERS' RIGHTS NEWSLETTER(Santa Fe, CA.)

Music Society In K.C. Passing On The Traditions

"...students...attend weekly Traditional Music Society classes at the Forest YMCA. The Society is an arts organization dedicated to promoting, performing and teaching the music of West Africa, South America, Central America and the Caribbean. Drummers are taught different hand positions for playing certain percussive instruments, rhythmic patterns and how they are assembled to create polyrhythm, and the interrelationship of all the instruments to create the ensemble sound. Dancers are taught posture, body awareness, balance, coordination and the basis of rhythmic dance in relationship to the music..."

-from "Students Of World Music And Dance," page 7, Feb. 20-26 THE CALL(Kansas City, MO.)

American Indian Movement Colorado Chapter Raises Questions About Absence Of Indigenous People On Clinton's Initiative on Race Board

"The American Indian Movement of Colorado plans a protest and picket against what they say is a 'Dog and Pony" show of the President Bill Clinton's Initiative on Race Board...

"...the AIMC calls it a 'dog and pony show' because it doesn't include any American Indians on the board and doesn't look at the views of the problems facing American Indians in today's society...

"The AIMC has posed several questions they feel should be addressed before proper representation can be established. 'How can a presidential advisory board engage in a national dialogue on race without even an indigenous person/American Indian on the board'? they asked. 'How can this board pretend to have dialogue on race without addressing the foundational racist legal doctrines of discovery and conquest that continue to be bedrock U.S. indigenous policy'?

"'How can a board such as this engage in national dialogue on race without specifically addressing the racism of U.S. immigration policy'?

"The AIMC is making five specific demands of Bill Clinton: The immediate coordination and impaneling of a joint Executive/Legislative Red-Ribbon Commission to engage in an examination of relations between the U.S. and Indigenous nations including Alaska, Hawaii and Guam.

"At least one half of the commissioners should be indigenous people and include a vision toward a restoration of the international character of the relations between the U.S. and indigenous nations.

"Immediately grant the Presidential clemency of Leonard Peltier.

"Immediately order all members of Clinton's cabinet to endorse, support and to advance the United Nations Declaration

of Rights to Indigenous Peoples as it existed in 1993.

"Through executive order repudiate, both retroactively and prospectively, the Doctrines of Discovery, Conquest and Terra Nullius that have been used, in U.S. indigenous nations, and that deny indigenous peoples the exercise of their right of self-determination as the term is used in international law.

"Immediately cease all military assistance to the government of Mexico...

"'When Director of the board, John Hope Franklin vetoed Vine DeLoria's position on the panel, we knew it was a worthless panel', Mrl Newcomb[Steven Newcomb, Director of the Indian Law Institute in Kyle, S.D.] said..." [Emphasis added by FLAME]

-from "Clinton's Race Board Called 'Dog And Pony Show,'" pages 1 and 3, March 30-April 6 INDIAN COUNTRY TODAY (Rapid City, So. Dakota)

"Africa Trade And Opportunity Act" Criticized

..."Africa today accounts for only one percent of all U.S. trade, but its virtually untapped market of 700 million people is drawing increasing interest from American businesses.

"Even before the House of Representatives passed the 'Africa Trade and Opportunity Act' March 11 U.S. trade has been growing rapidly, at the rate of 20 percent per year, according to Rep. Ed Royce(R-Calif.), Chairman of the House Africa Subcommittee...

"Today, according to some critics the African Growth and Opportunity Act is an attempt by U.S. policy makers to 're-colonize' the continent with the legislation which they see as a 'fast-track' cross between the North American Free Trade Agreement(NAFTA) and the Multi-Lateral Agreement on Investments...

"Instead of simply criticizing the current policy, Food

First[Food First Institute of Food and Development Policy] has proposed a five-point plan to guarantee 'a real fair deal for Africa', to really demonstrate U.S. commitment to sub-Saharan Africa, to its economic development, and to its democratization.

"The five points advocated by Food First are:
-100 percent debt forgiveness. 'We're talking about writing off that $200 billion in debt..(the principle for which) has actually (already) been paid off several times over'..
-A permanent seat for Sub-Saharan Africa on the UN Security Council
-Food must be totally removed from GATT and World Trade Organization(WTO) rules and regulations. 'There's no way you're going to alleviate hunger on the continent if African countries are not allowed to protect their farmers and their agricultural sector'..
-We believe there should be no U.S. military aid and training in Africa, whatsoever.
-The U.S. should support within the United Nations, African-regional solutions to economic development and conflict resolution..."

from "Clinton Visits Africa, World Awaits Trip Outcome," pages 3 and 7, March 31 THE FINAL CALL

Coverage of Jericho March

"Jericho is a national movement to publicize the fact that, in spite of US government denials, over 150 Political Prisoners are incarcerated in the US--some for almost 30 years. Most PPs are people of color, who were involved in dissident activities during the 60s and 70s. Those POWs familiar to me were provoked, then attacked by police or undercover federal agents, through the FBI's COINTEL Program, whose aim was to discredit and disrupt their activities. A new COINTELPROGRAM, known as COINTELPRO/NEW KILL seems now to be in operation.

"Organizers sponsored a march to the White House on March 28. Jericho is a symbol of hope that the walls will come tumbling down. The march was well attended (est. 5,000 people) and well organized, and there was racial diversity in abundance.

"Cameras and reporters were present, but the Washington news media did not cover the event during the weekend...

"The march was closely monitored, and we weren't allowed to set up tables. Poles for holding up banners were also forbidden--apparently viewed as potential weapons. Security was heavy around the entire park, and restroom facilities were inconveniently far away...

"All the speakers were excellent, particularly those from the many local organizations like ours in Nebraska that support Political Prisoners. Angela Davis spoke, as well as Geronimo je jaga, Ramona Africa, John Trudell, Dennis Banks, Attorneys Afeni Shakur and Chokwe Lumumba, and many others...Food Not Bombs was also there, and fed vegetarian food to hundreds of people.

"I was also impressed with the number of youths present, and active in movements across the country. The New York contingent brought 40 busloads of youth--and they're planning a Million Youth March [for] later this year.

"Several 'revolutionary' musical groups performed rap music about injustice. I particularly liked the John Africa (MOVE) rap group, who were the children of MOVE activists, either dead or still in prison. The media may have ignored the Jericho March, but it has brought groups together who are determined to joing forces to free US Political Prisoners."

-from "Lincoln Justice Committee In Action: Jericho '98," page 1 and 8, Apr/July BUFFALO CHIP(Omaha, NE.)

REVIEWS

AN AFROCENTRIC GUIDE TO A SPIRITUAL UNION

Author: Ra Un Nefer Amen

Publisher: Khamit Corporation

Pages: 122

AN AFROCENTRIC GUIDE TO A SPIRITUAL UNION, published in 1992, is an effort by the author to, as the title suggests, give guidance to African people in this country as to entering and maintaining healthy male-female relationships. The book is divided into nine chapters, beginning with "Culture: The Fundamental Cause and Solution of the Problems in the Relationship of Men and Women" and ending with "Solutions Through Rites of Passage And The Social Covenant."

In his preface, Amen states, among other things: "The failure of the western[European] males to perceive the abstract ties and equality between themselves and their women caused him to establish a policy of inhuman oppression of the white woman...We will see that since the family is a partnership entity, with all that it implies about equality, and given the fact that the white male has failed to treat his mate as a partner, the western world has failed to develop a wholesome family institution."

In his first chapter, Amen puts lays out the premise that individual human beings are, fundamentally, products of the cultural environments that surround them and that, if large numbers of individuals are exhibiting a common type of problematic behavior, then we should look, not to those individuals, but to their cultural environments for the cause of such behavior. From there he moves to the make-up of the human brain, distinguishing the functions of its various parts, contrasting thebestial/base functions with those which enable us to make constructive choices, right-brain holistic "sight" with left-brain segregative/departmentalizing "sight," etc.

Amen then goes on to speak of European(Caucasian) culture and to assert that it is fed by a cultivation of brain functions that promote values and attitudes that are destructive

to wholesome family life. He addresses, at length, the European male's history-long oppression of women, the property relationships which characterized his treatment of the woman throughout much of that history, and so forth.

From there, the author brings European culture to the U.S., addresses the institution of slavery, and talks about the impact that institution had on the family lives of our forefathers. He makes the point that, as destructive as was slavery on African family structures in the U.S., the economic system since then, institutionally generated ideas and attitudes about sex, and other factors have placed innumerable road-blocks in our way toward positive male-female and family relationships. Amen especially stresses the dominating society's tendency to confuse love with romantic feelings as a contributor to the failure of so many relationships to work. In addressing these issues, he makes it plain that, while it is Europeans' attitudes and values that brings trouble to their relationships, we have taken on their cultural traits just as they have and, as a result, face the same problems--compounded by the fact that we bear the brunt of racism.

But what is the solution? How do we, as Africans in the U.S., get our family lives back in order? For the solution, Amen takes us back to the Motherland, introducing us to what he refers to as the "divisions of the spirit"--a Kemetic(ancient "Egyptian") concept by which we are seen to operate from seven levels of consciousness, beginning with the physical in which we have "the illusion that we are separate beings" and reaching the final level in which we have the ability to see ourselves as part of the "Universal Spirit" and are able to see our interests as indistinguishable from universal interests. But Amen doesn't leave us hanging on some kind of philosophical trip. He cites practical historical examples from Kemet and other parts of Africa to show us how family structures worked and, in many societies, still work. He introduces us to traditional African courtship, rites of passage, and other gifts from our ancestors that we can make use of in the present to bring order back into our relationships with each other. In addition, Ra Un Nefer Amen suggests other books we can read in order to get more thorough understanding of issues and ideas which space limitations didn't allow him to go into in depth.

-Editor

BACK IN TIME

In 1867 the Reconstruction Acts put the South under military occupation and gave freedmen in the 11 Southern states the right to vote. (In the North, on the other hand, Negroes continued to be barred from the polls in all but nine states, either by specific racial qualifications or by prohibitive taxation...)...The plantation system meant that large numbers of Negroes remained under tight control and were vulnerable to economic reprisals. Although Negroes could out-vote whites in some states and did in fact control the Louisiana and South Carolina legislatures, the franchise did not lead to real power.

The lack of power was largely due to the Negro's economic vulnerability, but the group divisions that had developed during slavery also played a part. It was the "mixed-bloods" and the house slaves of middle- and upper-class whites who had acquired some education and skills under slavery; now many of these people became Negro leaders. They often had emotional ties to whites and a need to please them, and they advanced the cause of the Negroes as a group most gingerly. Moreover, not understanding the causes of the apathy, lack of achievement and asocial behavior of some of their fellows, many of them found their Negro identity a source of shame rather than psychological support, and they were ready to subordinate the needs of the group to personal gains that would give them as much social and psychological distance from their people as possible. The result was that some Negro leaders, with some notable exceptions, often became the tools of white leaders. Throughout the Reconstruction period meaningful Negro power was being destroyed, and long before the last Negro disappeared from Southern legislatures Negroes were powerless.

-excerpted from THE RHETORIC OF BLACK POWER by Robert L. Scott and Wayne Brockriede

KUUMBA

THE CYCLE

Nike sneakers fall through space and time
as our minds reel
as our eyes gaze down at a friend's feet
tension mounts
desire increases
and thoughts get loud
the smoke from the pistol billows

one lies dead
as these crazy thoughts in our heads
of gold chains, "beautiful" women
safari bars become destiny
to seek for
as crack sales from the young peddler
increase chances of death or jail
as we become the corners' tokens
and silence is broken by the voice
behind the badge

lights glaring in the city dungeon
as wishes for forgotten dreams and wise words
keep the lost one silent
fear strikes his heart
he runs his mouth

more victims are gathered
to be packed in cells
representing their end
and the beginning all over again
of mothers' cries echoing
the wails of those before them
as pale faces now as then grin
as the children are taken off in chains
and the bonds of family split
for free labor to exploit

and it aint on the news
like this.

-Urser Maati Ra

HARAMBEE AFRIKAN CULTURAL ORGANIZATION CREED

Together we seek to know that which is us, to expand our collective consciousness of who we are and whence we come. We exalt in the fact that Afrikans are beautiful in our own right, rather than at the expense of any other group of people. And in the true spirit of the Swahili word, "harambee," we promote the idea that cultural awareness is germane to human growth.

NGUZO SABA(Seven Principles)

Umoja - Unity
Kujichagulia - Self-determination
Ujima - Collective work & responsibility
Ujamaa - Cooperative economics
Nia - Purpose
Kuumba - Creativity
Imani - Faith

HARAMBEE AFRIKAN CULTURAL ORGANIZATION

CENTRAL COMMITTEE

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Eso/Alakoso Asha(Sgt.-at-Arms/Chairman of Cultural Affairs Committee) - Kenny Walker

Olotu Eko(Education Chairman) - *Mondo

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*HARAMBEE FLAME Editor